



The Sixty-sixth Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,674th Concert

Poulenc Trio

Vladimir Lande, *oboe*
Bryan Young, *bassoon*
Irina Kaplan Lande, *piano*

May 4, 2008
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Trio in B-flat Major, op. 11 (c. 1791)

Allegro con brio

Adagio

Tema con variazioni

Mikhail Glinka (1804–1857)

Trio Pathétique in D Minor (1832)

Allegro moderato

Scherzo

Largo

Allegro con spirito

INTERMISSION

Francis Poulenc (1899–1963)

Trio for Piano, Oboe, and Bassoon (1926)

Presto

Andante

Rondo

André Previn (b. 1929)

Trio for Oboe, Bassoon, and Piano (1994)

Lively

Slow

Jaunty

The Musicians

The Poulenc Trio brings together three uniquely gifted virtuosi, oboist Vladimir Lande, bassoonist Bryan Young, and pianist Irina Kaplan Lande. The Trio's performances in the unusual combination of their respective instruments transport audiences into a world of beautiful sonorities, playful rhythms, and dramatic excitement. One of a select few professional wind trios, the Poulenc Trio is committed to expanding the repertoire through the discovery of old masterpieces and new works.

The Trio was recently featured at Italy's Ravello Festival, where it premiered two new compositions written especially for them. The new pieces, by Italian composer Gaetano Panariello and Russian-American composer Igor Raykhelson, add to the Trio's growing catalogue of new commissions, which includes two works premiered with violinist Hilary Hahn and two Triple Concertos with orchestra, premiered during the 2006–2007 and current seasons.

The Trio's busy concert schedule has included a recent tour of Russia with Hilary Hahn, a tour in the Islands of the Caribbean, and multiple appearances across the United States. Highlights of the Trio's current season include a performance at the United States Performing Arts Exchange Conference; a whistle-stop tour of the western United States; and concerts in Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Washington, DC, and Wisconsin. The Trio will also continue its Music at the Museum series, begun in 2004 to sold-out performances at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, and recently expanded to performances at the National Gallery and the Zimmerli Art Museum in New Jersey. This innovative series, which links musical and historical themes to current museum exhibitions, features the Trio in performances with guest artists, local celebrities, and expert lecturers. Guest artists for the popular series have included clarinetist Alexander Fiterstein, soprano Hyunah Yu, and the Berlin-based Jacques Thibaud Trio, and will include the National Gallery Chamber Players in the 2008–2009 season.

The Poulenc Trio has garnered positive attention in recent full-length profiles by *Chamber Music Magazine* and by the *Double Reed Journal*. The group has been called “virtuosos of classical and contemporary chamber music” in a profile for Russian television, and it has been repeatedly praised by the *Washington Post*, the *Baltimore Sun*, and *Fanfare Magazine*.

The Program

The opening work on this program is a transcription of Beethoven’s *Trio for Violin, Cello, and Piano in B-flat Major*, op. 11, in which the oboe takes the place of the violin and the bassoon that of the cello. In the opening *Allegro*, emphatic unison passages communicate strength and firmness of purpose. The second movement (*Adagio*) moves to the subdominant key (E-flat major) and introduces a minuet, usually missing from a three-movement work in the Classical period. The third movement is a set of nine variations on a tune from a comic opera by Joseph Weigl (1766–1846), who was the director of music at Vienna’s Kärntnertor Theater. It reminds the listener that as a young man Beethoven, who is remembered with such serious reverence by posterity, attended and enjoyed the light entertainments of his day. Beethoven, full of idealism and enthusiasm, was twenty when he wrote the Trio. He already showed some worldly wisdom, however, as he dedicated the trio to Countess von Thun, the mother-in-law of an influential patron, Prince Karl Lichnowsky, who had already shown interest in his work.

Musicologists have called Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka the first great Russian composer. He wrote his *Trio Pathétique* while sojourning in Italy for the sake of his health. He was subjected to painful treatments for a respiratory ailment, but he nevertheless made good use of his time in Italy, studying composition at the Milan Conservatory and encountering as often as possible the music of Vincenzo Bellini (1801–1835) and Gaetano Donizetti (1797–1848). His letters to his family from that time reveal that he was also susceptible to some of Italy’s other charms. An excerpt reads: “a little Italian

bedroom, a pretty moonlight glistening in through the window, and, reposing there, a beautiful Italian girl. Her black hair falls free...upon her shoulders and her bosom... Everything about her declares passion and voluptuousness.” In the margin of the manuscript for the trio, Glinka wrote: “I have known love only by the pain it brings,” prompting subsequent editors to dub this the *Trio Pathétique*—a misleading subtitle, given the work’s overall genial and lyrical tone.

Francis Poulenc attained a recognizable compositional style and considerable fame as a composer while still in his twenties. He was one of a group of young French composers who banded together in the 1920s and became known as “Les Six” (Georges Auric, Louis Durey, Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud, Poulenc, and Germaine Tailleferre). He was the most successful of the six in producing music that reflected the group’s manifesto, which can be paraphrased: wittiness and urbanity in music are good; cerebral, pious, or pompous music is bad. His music is marked by close juxtapositions of wit and irony with lush, sentimental passages.

Poulenc’s *Trio for Piano, Oboe, and Bassoon* recalls the spirit of an eighteenth-century divertissement, spicing it with twentieth-century dissonances. The composer alternately combines and contrasts the two families of instruments represented in a wind trio—winds and percussion—with great effectiveness. The composer looked to prototypes in trios by three of his great predecessors—for the first movement (*Presto*), Josef Haydn; for the second (*Andante*), Mozart; and for the final *Rondo*, Saint-Saëns. Thanks to Poulenc’s constantly shifting tonality and chromaticism, the work pays homage to earlier great composers without sounding derivative.

Born in Germany, André Previn immigrated with his family to the United States in 1939 to escape Nazi persecution. He attended Beverly Hills High School in Los Angeles and devoted the first part of his career to jazz. In the 1960s, Previn turned to orchestral conducting and composition in a variety of styles. He was appointed conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra in 1985 and held the post until 1989.

Previn's *Trio for Oboe, Bassoon, and Piano* was the result of a joint commission from the Orchestra of Saint Luke's, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust. It received its premiere performance in 1996. Remembering his roots in jazz, Previn incorporates jazz rhythms in the trio as well as open harmonies such as are frequently found in the music of Aaron Copland (1900–1990) and Roy Harris (1898–1979). Well aware that Poulenc had set the stage for all subsequent wind trios with his *Trio for Piano, Oboe, and Bassoon*, Previn employed the same technique of presenting the instruments in families (oboe and bassoon together, piano by itself in contrast), particularly in the last movement (*Jaunty*) of his trio.

Next Week at the National Gallery of Art

Opera Lafayette

Ryan Brown, *conductor and artistic director*

Music by Monsigny and David

May 11, 2008

Sunday evening, 6:30 pm

West Building, West Garden Court

For the convenience of concertgoers
the Garden Café remains open until 6:00 pm.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the
performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones,
pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry of
the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

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